Working with dangerous offenders: What is achievable?

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HM Chief Inspector of Probation
Four purposes of offender management:

- Punish
- Help
- Change
- Control

Effective Offender Management
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Context: Public expectations

- Achievement
- Expectations
Not achieving success?

- Statistically, Serious Further Offences are committed by \( \approx 0.5\% \) of those under supervision overall, and \( \approx 0.5\% \) of those under MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protectn).

- But that’s still \( \approx 250 \) individual nasty offences per year, \( \approx 100 \) of which are the most serious: murder, rape etc – each of which is a dreadful personal tragedy.

- Hence, despite the statistics, each individual case we hear about publicly is experienced as a failure, and a symptom of a failing service.
Who are ‘dangerous offenders’?

“Dangerous”?  All the other offenders (?)

Is it like this?  Or like this?
Committing Serious Further Offences:

The c7% of offenders assessed as High or V High Risk of Harm (RoH) commit c20% of SFOs.

c80% of SFOs committed by Med/Low RoH.
Assessment: Actuarial & individual

- HMI Probation very critical about failures to take proper notice of actuarial information
- Strong reaction in some quarters (esp prisoners) to this renewed emphasis on actuarial
- Poor understanding of relationship between actuarial and individual assessment?

Some much more risky than others, but always complex
Actuarial: Like insurance …

Turning individual complexity into categories of risk

But not completely like insurance …
Individual assessment

- **Insurance:**
  If you are 70% likely to crash your car, the company will (perhaps) set a huge premium, but then it’s up to you to ‘stay out of trouble’

- **Managing offenders:**
  If 7 out of 10 offenders in this category will reoffend you must assess:
  - i) Whether he will be one of the 7 who does, or one of the 3 who does not reoffend, and …
  - ii) …What actions you can plan, and make sure they happen, that make this individual more likely to be one of the 3 that succeeds.

  **Scientific, but it is not an exact science**
Interventions:

**Remembering the restrictive interventions**

- Yes, do the constructive interventions ...
- ... But failures on the restrictive interventions are where staff are left most exposed
- Needed: Constant vigilance to RoH issues, alertness and an investigative approach, sharing information with others
- Responsiveness to new information, with action to keep to a minimum the offender’s Risk of Harm to others
Outcomes: What is achievable?

In prison, locked up

Not in prison, NOT locked up, can do good - - or ill

80-90% control over life?

5 - 10% control over life?

Kemshall’s principles of defensible decision-making?

[Hindsight in advance] How would it look to an Inspector later, if the worst were to happen tomorrow?
Summary of what is achievable:

- **Assessment stage**: Identify what is the RoH to others, and what you plan to do to keep to a minimum that offender’s RoH to others.
- **Interventions**: Take action as planned, and in response to changing circumstances, to keep to a minimum that offender’s RoH to others.
- **Outcomes**: Should a SFO happen, as it will from time to time, you can demonstrate that you took all reasonable action to keep to a minimum that offender’s RoH to others.

To summarise the summary....
“...Take all reasonable action to keep to a minimum each offender’s Risk of Harm to others...”

i.e. “Doing the job properly”